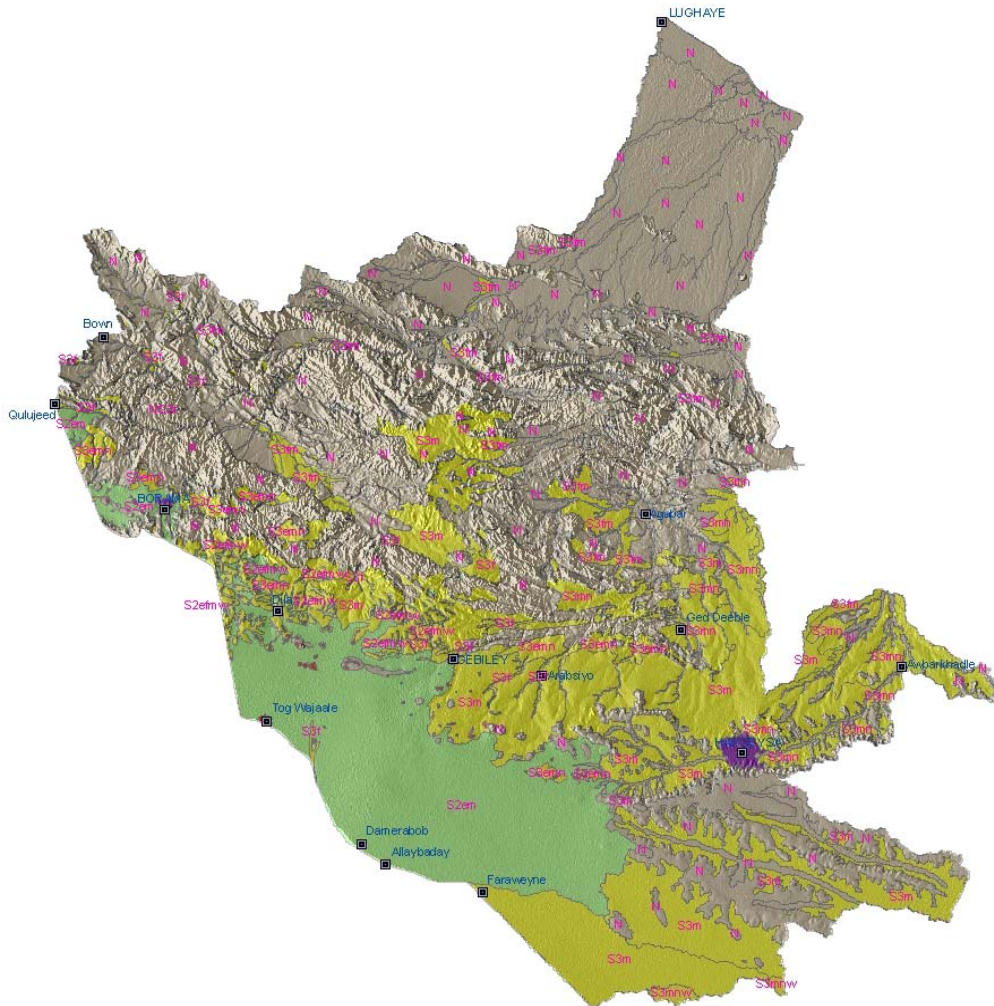




Land Suitability Assessment of a Selected Study Area in Somaliland



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List of acronyms

ALES	Automated Land Evaluation System
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
GIS	Geographical Information System
GP	Growing Period
LCCS	Land Cover Classification System
LC	Land Characteristic
LGP	Length of Growing Period
LQ	Land Quality
LUR	Land Use Requirement
LUT	Land Use Type
masl	meters above sea level
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
PET	Potential Evapotranspiration
RBU	Resource Base Unit
SOMALES	Somalia Automated Land Evaluation System
SWALIM	Somalia Water and Land Information Management

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1 INTRODUCTION

Knowledge of the land and water resources is a key component for planning the development of any region. This knowledge is used in land suitability assessments, which determine the potentiality of the land (land resources supply) for different land use types (land user demand).

Land evaluation is the process of predicting land performance over time according to specific types of use (Dent and Young, 1981; FAO, 1983; Rossiter, 1996). It is a very important step in land use planning which according to FAO (1985) is the systematic assessment of land and water potential and alternatives for land use and economic and social conditions in order to select and adopt the best land use options.

The present study is based on land resource data collected by the SWALIM team in the period 2005 – 2006 as detailed in various SWALIM Land Reports and uses established and tested FAO methodology to assess land suitability for various types of land agricultural land use.

Major types of land use considered are rainfed agriculture (crops), irrigated agriculture, extensive grazing (pastoralism) and plantation forests. Results are presented in the form of Tables, Maps and narratives.

The results presented do not constitute a land use plan, but only form one of the many inputs for such a plan. If an area has been classified as highly suitable for a certain use, it does not necessarily mean that this use is recommended. Land use recommendations should be based on many socio-economic and cultural factors, in addition to a physical suitability assessment. However, if a certain area has been classified as physically unsuitable for a certain use, it is unlikely that this use will ever be considered in a comprehensive land use plan.

In addition to giving a land suitability assessment of the study area, this report also gives details of the Somalia Automated Land Evaluation System (SOMALES). This system is also applied for a SWALIM study area in southern Somalia and can be used for similar exercises in the future. Not only can other areas be studied in a similar way, also other types of land use can be analyzed through SOMALES.